

Remarks:

Claims 1-6 and 12-17 remain for consideration in this application. In view of the claims as they now stand, together with the remarks hereunder, the rejections of the first Office Action must be respectfully traversed.

The present invention is concerned with improved reverse tapered grips specially adapted for use with golf clubs. It has been found that grips having certain important constructional features set forth in the claims hereof give increased club control and speed, in order to positively affect a golfer's game. Thus, the grips of the invention are in the form of an elongated body formed of resilient synthetic resin material and have a length of from about 6-14 inches. Moreover, the grips have a small diameter outboard end close to the extreme end of the shaft, and a larger diameter inboard end closer to the club head. The grip also has a generally axial bore extending from the inboard end to a point proximal to the outboard end, so that the grip presents an outer gripping surface and an inner shaft-engaging surface. The outer surface is in the form of a reverse taper section between the outboard and inboard ends of the body. The thickness of the body between the outer gripping surface and the inner shaft-engaging surface increases along the length of the reverse taper section, with the ratio of the greater thickness to the smaller thickness being from about 1.1-1.7. A further feature of the claimed grips is the provision of an elongated region of substantially constant diameter extending from greater thickness end described above. This constant diameter region having a length of from about 1-4 inches, and the ratio of the length of the tapered section and the length of the constant diameter region is from about 4-7.

This claimed combination is nowhere suggested or taught by the art of record. First of all, it will be appreciated that claims 1 and 12 have been amended so that the subject matter of original claims 7-9 have been added to these independent claims. As a consequence, originally lodged rejections under paragraph 7 of the Action relying upon 2001-46568 in view of Manual are irrelevant. This leaves only the rejections under paragraph 8 based upon the '950 patent in view of 2001-46568 and Manual. This latter rejection cannot stand in light of the present claims as amended.

The Examiner frankly concedes that the primary '950 patent lacks: an axial bore; a body thickness between outer and inner surfaces; a body thickness increasing along a reverse taper section; and the claimed ratio of 1.1-1.7. It is submitted that these conceded differences in and of themselves render the '950 patent irrelevant to the claimed subject matter. It should also be noted that the '950 grip would be *incapable* of receiving a shaft, such as the shaft 65, throughout substantially all of the length of the grip as claimed herein. A consideration of Fig. 5A will confirm that, at most, the shaft 5A could extend only a partial distance along the length of the grip. This is in contrast to the claimed construction wherein the grip has a diameter greater than the diameter of the shaft throughout the entirety of the length of the grip.

In any case, the Examiner next refers to the Japanese reference which does depict a reverse taper grip having an axial bore and increasing wall thickness. However, the Japanese reference in now way suggests a grip having a constant diameter inboard section as called for in the amended claims. Indeed, the teachings of this reference would direct a skilled artisan away from such a construction. In addition, the further details set forth in the claims are nowhere met in the Japanese

reference, i.e., the provision of a constant diameter region having a length of from about 1-4 inches and the length ratio of from 4-7.

The Manual reference is even more remote, and is not even concerned with a reverse taper grip at all. Apparently this reference is cited only for teaching of a particular type of synthetic resin material, and is otherwise not pertinent.

Any hypothetical combination of these disparate references must of necessity be based upon a hindsight reconstruction of the references in light of applicant's disclosure. Stated otherwise, there is no suggestion in the art of employing any features found in the '950 patent dealing with molded grips not having a bore and being incapable of receiving a shaft into reverse taper grips which receive the shaft along the essentially the full length of the grip, as now claimed. And without such a teaching or suggestion the obviousness rejection is improper.

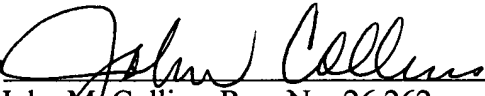
Applicant has made a sincere effort to claim the present invention in a relatively detailed and specific manner, consistent with his contribution to the art. However, should the Examiner have any further suggestions regarding claim language, it is suggested that a call be placed to the undersigned.

The Section 112 rejections lodged in the Action have been remedied by appropriate claim amendments and cancellations. It is believed that all such problems have been obviated. Again, however, if further problems of this nature remain in the Examiner's view, a phone conference is suggested.

Any additional fee which is due in connection with this amendment should be applied against our Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

In view of the foregoing, a Notice of Allowance appears to be in order and such is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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